



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW STATEWIDE SCIENCE ASSESSMENT

Task Force Report. On March 21, 2016, the Iowa Assessment Task Force completed a [report on a new science assessment](#). The task force recommended that the ACT Aspire science assessment be used for the statewide science assessment through the 2019-2020 school year and administered in grades 5, 8, and 10.

Background. During the 2013 Legislative Session, [HF 215](#) created the Iowa Assessment Task Force to review and make recommendations for a statewide assessment on academic indicators in mathematics, reading, and science. In December 2014, the task force completed a [report recommending a new statewide assessment in mathematics and reading](#). The State Board of Education [adopted the recommended assessment](#) in November 2015. In August 2015, the State Board adopted [new science standards](#) and charged the task force with recommending a statewide science assessment aligned with the new science standards.

Recommendations. The task force made the following recommendations for the statewide science assessment:

- Adopt a new science assessment to be utilized through the 2019-2020 school year.
- Administer the science assessment once in each of the three grade spans (3-5, 6-8, 9-12) on a short-term basis. Current Iowa Code requires science assessment in grades 3-11. This recommendation necessitates legislative action by the General Assembly.
- Adopt the ACT Aspire science assessment to be administered in grades 5, 8, and 10.
- Request that the General Assembly appropriate state funds to support school district payments for the ACT Aspire science assessment.
- Require annual meetings of the Iowa Assessment Task Force through 2020 to review science assessment options.
- Direct the Iowa Department of Education to pursue options for accessing a statewide assessment aligned to the state's science standards, such as developing an Iowa-only assessment or joining a possible state consortium to share costs and expertise to develop a science assessment.

New Assessment. The [ACT Aspire](#) science assessments are fixed-form tests that are offered in both computer-based and paper-and-pencil format and are available for the 2016-17 school year. The assessments include selected response, technology-enhanced (computer-based administration only), and constructed item types. The assessments are timed and take 55 minutes to administer.

Costs. The costs for the ACT Aspire assessments are estimated at \$8.00 per student for computer-based tests, \$12.00 per student for the paper-and-pencil format, and \$1.20 per student for five-page student score reports. A summary of estimated costs is shown in the following table.

Estimated Costs – ACT Aspire Science Assessment – 2016-2017 School Year

	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 10	Total
Projected 16-17 Public School Enrollment	37,138	36,493	36,567	110,198
Computer Testing (no printed reports) - \$8/student	\$ 297,104	\$ 291,944	\$ 292,536	\$ 881,584
Computer Testing (with printed reports) - \$9.20/student	341,670	335,736	336,416	1,013,822
Paper-Pencil Testing (no printed reports) - \$12/student	445,656	437,916	438,804	1,322,376
Paper-Pencil Testing (with printed reports) - \$13.20/student	490,222	481,708	482,684	1,454,614

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